



TO: State and Local Health Officials

FROM: Daniel Jernigan, MD, MPH
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Incident Manager, 2014 Ebola Response
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DATE: June 12, 2015

SUBJECT: CDC's Guidance to State and Local Health Officials regarding the World Health Organization's (WHO) Declaration of the End of the Ebola Outbreak in Liberia

On May 9, 2015, WHO declared the end of the Ebola outbreak in Liberia, and on May 13, 2015, CDC changed the country classification for Liberia to a "country with former widespread transmission and current, established control measures." As an added precaution, WHO also recommended an additional 90-day enhanced surveillance period to assure Liberia remains free of Ebola transmission.

As of June 17, 2015, after carefully considering all available options for protecting the public's health and safety, the U.S. government is modifying its enhanced Ebola entry screening and monitoring program for travelers returning from Liberia. We will be recommending a step-down approach to monitoring travelers from Liberia. This change **does not** affect U.S. enhanced entry screening and post-arrival monitoring for travelers returning from Sierra Leone and Guinea, nor does it affect exit screening for travelers departing Liberia. CDC is updating its *Interim U.S. Guidance for Monitoring and Movement of Persons with Potential Ebola Virus Exposure* and will inform states as soon as possible of specific recommendations.

Summary of Changes

As a result of this policy change, travelers from Liberia will:

- Continue to be screened in Liberia before departure;
- Continue to be funneled through one of five designated U.S. airports (New York's JFK, Washington-Dulles, Newark International, Chicago O'Hare, and Atlanta Hartsfield-Jackson);
- Continue to be screened upon arrival by U.S. Customs and Border Protection; and
- Receive **modified** Check and Report Ebola (CARE) kits with instructions for them to *watch their health for 21 days after leaving Liberia and to contact their local health departments if they have a fever or any other symptoms consistent with Ebola*. These self-observation instructions are described in the attachment.

CDC's actions as a result of the policy change include:

- Updating *Interim U.S. Guidance for Monitoring and Movement of Persons with Potential Ebola Virus Exposure* and recommending that states discontinue active monitoring for travelers returning from Liberia, unless the traveler reports being in Sierra Leone or Guinea within the past 21 days;
- Recommending that travelers returning from Liberia, who have not also been to Sierra Leone or Guinea, watch their health for 21 days and contact their local health departments if they develop any symptoms consistent with Ebola. States may choose to discontinue active monitoring of these travelers who are currently in the U.S. prior to the completion of their 21-day monitoring period; and
- Discontinuing routine Epi-X notification to states for travelers returning from Liberia, unless the state specifically requests notification.

Although the risk of Ebola is extremely low within Liberia, travelers will be encouraged to watch their health for 21 days after leaving Liberia and to contact their state or local health department if they develop symptoms that might be consistent with Ebola. CDC will recommend that health care providers take thorough histories (covering health, travel, and exposure) and use clinical judgment to evaluate patients based on those histories and their symptoms. CDC will be addressing clinical care issues separately through a Clinician Outreach and Communication Activity call, as well as through new guidance for clinicians and health systems that will be posted on the CDC Website (www.cdc.gov/ebola).

This step-down approach will enable us to restore screening and monitoring measures quickly, if needed, and also continue to provide information to travelers and states. Thank you to those who have reached out with questions and concerns. We appreciate your feedback, as well as your continued support of the post-arrival monitoring process.

CDC is closely monitoring the situation in West Africa and will update our state, local, and health care partners if there are important developments. We will continue to periodically evaluate the need for continued screening of travelers from Liberia to consider when additional step-down measures will be warranted. We continue to welcome your valuable insights as we work together to protect the health of the American public. CDC remains vigilant and will take appropriate action as needed to respond to the epidemic in West Africa.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Daniel B. Jernigan", with a stylized flourish at the end.

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